

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00639 110723Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2241
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0639

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, CZ
SUBJECT: VISIT OF DEPUTY FONMIN SPACIL

REF STATE 40822 NOTAL

1. CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE NOT DISCUSSED WITH US PLANNING OF PROPOSED SPACIL VISIT SINCE WE RECEIVED REFTEL, SO MESSAGE ON ITS POSTPONEMENT REMAINS UNDELIVERED.

2. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR DUMAS HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN FISHING FOR SEVERAL WEEKS FOR INFORMATION ON OUR INTENTIONS ABOUT VISIT SINCE CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE INTERESTED IN SENDING SPACIL TO OTTAWA IN CONJUNCTION WITH A WASHINGTON VISIT. MY REPLY HAS BEEN THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE NOT DISCUSSED A SPECIFIC DATE WITH US, BUT THAT THE CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING RECENT MISTREATMENT OF US JOURNALISTS, MADE ME DOUBT THAT WASHINGTON WOULD WELCOME A SPACIL VISIT THIS SPRING.

3. ON MARCH 10 CANADIAN CHARGE SEABORN (DUMAS HAD LEFT FOR CONSULTATIONS IN OTTAWA EARLIER IN THE DAY) TOLD POLCOUNS THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD RAISED POSSIBILITY OF SPACIL GOING TO OTTAWA IN MAY "FOLLOWING THE NATO MINISTERIAL" AND ASKED WHAT PLANS WERE FOR A WASHINGTON VISIT. POLCOUNS REPEATED WHAT I HAD SAID TO DUMAS. SEABORN EXPRESSED A PERSONAL LACK OF ENTHUSIASM ABOUT
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A VISIT TO OTTAWA WHICH PROMISES NO BENEFIT FOR CANADA AND WOULD GIVE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS ONLY ANOTHER SCORE FOR THEIR ACTIVIST FOREIGN POLITCY.

4. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT SPACIL WILL SHORTLY PROBE US ABOUT A MAY VISIT. UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED, I WILL REPLY AS INSTRUCTED IN REFTEL THAT UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES VISIT

WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE AND SHOULD BE POSTPONED.

5. WE HAVE REFRAINED FROM TEWW NG OUR CANADIAN COLLEAGUES HERE THAT WE HAVE SUCH INSTRUCTIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY POSSIBILITY OF A LEAD OF OUR INTENTIONS. NOW THAT A MAY DATE HAS BEEN PROPOSED TO THEM, WE BELIEVE THAT CANADIANS SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED SPACIL VISIT TO WASHINGTON IS OFF UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. SUGGEST THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED TO SO INFORM CANADIAN EMBASSY AND THAT AMEMBASSY OTTAWA BE INSTRUCTED TO INFORM FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHILE DUMAS IS STILL IN OTTAWA.

6. THE MISTREATMENT OF WESTERN JOURNALISTS ISSUE HAS RECEDED A BIT HERE, BUT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH LED TO THE SEARCHES OF CORRESPONDENTS AND SEIZURE OF THEIR NOTES HAVE BEEN RECINDED. ANTI-US PROPAGANDA IS PRESENTLY AT AN EVEN HIGHER LEVEL THAN USUAL AND IS LIKELY TO STAY THERE AS LONG AS HUMAN RIGHTS REMAIN AN ISSUE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE THINK CONTINUED INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF SPAICIL VISIT IS APPROPRIATE.

BYRNE

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